Attachment 4
2003COF073

THE CITY OF Edmonton

Community Dialogue Sessions 2003

Prepared by:

TkMC
Formerly TurnKey Management Consulting

Edmonton: 800 Highfield Place, 10010-106 Street, Edmonton, AB, Canada T5J 3L8
p: 780.408.8876 f: 780.421.0494 www.tkmc.ca

Final Report June 13, 2003

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Executive Summary

The Community Dialogue Sessions were held on June 3 and June 4, 2003 at the Shaw Conference Centre. These half-day sessions were used to gather feedback from various groups within the city to provide City Council and Administration with input relating to the Plan Edmonton Vision, City Performance, Citizen Satisfaction Survey, 2004 financial forecast and options presented in the "Context, Challenges and Options" report and four questions asked by Council. In total, 84 participants, including various stakeholder groups, businesses, civic unions and individual citizens participated in the sessions over the two days.

Dialogue Session participants were divided into 5 breakout groups for the majority of the session. Each group was assigned a professional facilitator in order to maximize the amount of individual participant feedback. The breakout sessions utilized a round table discussion process in order to record participant feedback. Upon completion of the breakout sessions, a moderated session involving all of that day's participants was held to help identify common themes across all breakout groups. Further review of participant's input was conducted involving frequency analysis to quantitatively validate these themes.

Overall, there was general agreement with the Plan Edmonton Vision Statements although many participants were unclear on the definition or meaning of the wording in some statements such as "international smart city" and "vibrant economy". There was some concern that the statements were economic in nature and did not encompass more of the City's attributes such as quality of life, partnerships, safety, the environment and physical attractiveness of the City (e.g. what do these statements mean for citizens).

Participants generally felt that the City has performed quite well with respect to financial management considering the current funding issues with the provincial and federal government. However, some felt that there are areas or services where they consider wasteful spending to be occurring such as the development of Churchill Square and South Edmonton Common. Overall, it was felt that the City is managing its debt but the limit on service reductions has been reached. There was also consensus that the City has not done well at communicating the City's performance to citizens.

Participants were not surprised with the Citizen Satisfaction Survey results although there was concern in the survey approach. There was overall satisfaction with the services that the City is currently providing.

The general reaction by participants to the financial projections for 2004 was that the current financial situation faced by the City was not a surprise. Many questioned why they were hearing about this now and why something had not been done sooner to address the budget shortfall. Overall, participants agreed that we need to pay for our financial situation, and an increase is part of that package, however, revenue and cost initiatives must occur and the poor should not be harmed by such increases.

The four questions that Council motioned for consideration consisted of four themes: the growing role of municipal government, regional financing, regional governance and land use management. There was consensus that the municipal government should not turn over certain services to other forms of government and it was felt that the province should ensure that the City is properly compensated for programs and services that benefit the region. There was a split response when participants were asked about the potential for amalgamating with other municipalities. When asked about land use management, participants agreed that the City should make more efficient use of the land within the city before expanding.

At the end of each session, participants completed feedback forms in order to give the City input on the strengths and weaknesses of the sessions. Many participants appreciated the opportunity to be involved in this type of process and hoped that City Council would consider the input they provided before making any decisions. Even with the substantial quantity of background material, some participants desired more information than what they were given before the Dialogue Sessions. This certainly indicated an eagerness on the part of the participants to be further involved in the municipal planning and decision-making processes.

Methodology

The Community Dialogue Sessions assembled 84 participants, including various stakeholder groups, businesses, civic unions and individual citizens, over a period of two days to provide City Council and Administration with input relating to the Plan Edmonton Vision, City Performance, Citizen Satisfaction Survey, 2004 Financial Forecast and Options and four questions asked by Council. A list of the participants and their organizations is presented in Appendix I of this report.

The process of participant selection was designed to bring together participants representing a cross section of "citizens at large" as well as representatives from major community interest groups and businesses. This cross section was intended to provide City Council and Administration with a balanced range of taxpayer ideologies.

Each participant was provided with the "Context, Challenges and Options Report" that Council reviewed on May 26, 2003 as well as the motion with four questions that Council directed on May 28, 2003 be considered in the sessions. Included in this package was an information sheet that provided the participants with a general overview of the purpose of the sessions and an outline on how to prepare for the sessions (described later in this report under the heading "Session Summaries").

The Community Dialogue Sessions took place over two half days with each session involving approximately 40-45 participants. The following is a summary of the process that took place:

- Participants were divided into five groups (approximately 10 in each group) and assigned to groups based on their affiliation with the business community, association, unions, and interest groups, and citizens. Each of these groups were facilitated through two breakout sessions that lasted approximately an hour and fifteen minutes each:
  - Breakout Session One: "The City We Want" was discussed with emphasis on the participants' reactions to the Plan Edmonton Vision, City performance and citizen satisfaction.
  - Breakout Session Two: "The City We Can Afford" was discussed with emphasis on the participants' reaction to 2004 – 2013 Long Range Financial Plan. Options and strategies proposed for 2004 were also discussed and participants were asked for feedback and reaction as well as input on other options that the City should consider. The four questions that Council motioned for consideration in the sessions were also discussed during this session.
- Facilitators began each topic discussion with a high-level review of the appropriate background material. Each discussion topic was preceded by defined questions emphasizing the background material sent to each participant. The facilitator recorded each participant's comments before moving the group into

open discussion. The main body of this report presents common themes and summaries of the group sessions. Individual comments made by participants during each breakout session are contained in Appendix III. After each topic, the facilitators worked with participants to summarize the comments made thereby creating overall themes for each topic.

- At the end of the breakout sessions, all of the participants assembled once again and a summary of the facilitated sessions was presented during a moderated session. The purpose of this summary was to ensure that accurate messages were captured and no main points were missed. Additional participant comments and dialogue was also captured during the moderated sessions and included in this report. The agenda used during both sessions is presented in Appendix II.

Session Summaries

The following section provides a summary of the discussions that occurred throughout the Dialogue Sessions. Summaries of each topic area includes the thought provoking questions used to stimulate group discussion, identification of common group themes, followed by a brief summary of the issues and concerns that were voiced in each breakout group.

Breakout Session One: The City We Want

- Plan Edmonton Vision

Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:

1. What is your reaction to the vision statements?
2. Are these statements meaningful to you?
3. Which elements in these statements do you consider high priority?

<u>The following common themes were identified:</u>

- There was general agreement with the statements
- General concern that:
  - The statements seem to have an economic theme
  - There is no mention of safety
  - There is no mention of partnerships
  - There is no mention of quality of life. Need more description of the attributes – "what does it mean for the average citizen?:
  - The environment and physical attractiveness of the city is not mentioned
- Generally unclear about::
  - The definition of "Smart City"
  - Global, big business – need clarification of what this entails

Discussion Summary:

Overall, there was general agreement with the Plan Edmonton Vision Statements although many participants were unclear on the definition or meaning of the wording in some statements such as "international smart city" and "vibrant economy". There was some concern that the statements were economic in nature and did not encompass more of the City's attributes such as quality of life, partnerships, safety, the environment and physical attractiveness of the City (e.g. what do these statements mean for citizens).

- City Performance

Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:

1. What is your reaction to how the City has performed with respect to taxation levels and financial management?

The following common themes were identified:

- Overall financial management has been good especially considering the current funding issues with the provincial and federal government
- There was recognition that there are some pockets of services that are wasteful
- The performance measures need to be more than just dollar focused
- Infrastructure debt is acceptable if a managed plan in place
- In addition to the performance measures listed in the report, the City should also measure:
  - Linking of federal and province relationships
  - Quality of life (e.g. number of young people leaving the city as a potential indicator)
  - Expenditures and future planning
- City performance has not been reported well to citizens (lack of performance communication)
- Need more communication from the City; citizens need a better understanding – keep it simple
- Appears that there is a lack of priority setting by administration
- Difficult to assess performance. Reasons for this was based on some recent political decisions such as Churchill Square and South Edmonton Common.
- The City is managing debt but the limit on service reductions has been reached

Discussion Summary:

Participants generally felt that the City has performed quite well with respect to financial management considering the current funding issues with the provincial and federal government although some recognized that there are areas or services where they consider wasteful spending to be occurring such as the development of Churchill Square and South Edmonton Common. Overall, it was felt that the City is managing its debt but the limit on service reductions has been reached.

Many felt that the performance measures were too economic driven and that other performance measures such as quality of life, partnerships/relationships with other orders of government and future planning should be measured.

There was also general consensus that the City has not done well at communicating the City's performance to citizens. More communication is needed from the City on this important topic but it was cautioned that it needed to be stated in simple terms so that it could be readily understood. The other component on communication was that it needed to be two-way.

- ❑ Citizen Satisfaction Survey

Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:

1. What is your reaction to the survey results?
2. Do you agree/disagree with these results?
3. Are you satisfied with City services?

The following common themes were identified:

- ➢ Survey results not surprising
- ➢ Surprising that safety (crime rates) was not more of an issue
- ➢ There were some concerns with the survey approach
  - ▪ That survey participants not using or have limited knowledge of the services they were asked to comment on
  - ▪ Need more communication and citizen input throughout the year
- ➢ Need more promotion of services so that public awareness is increased
- ➢ We have a lot to take pride in (e.g. environment); make sure we celebrate our successes
- ➢ Overall, people satisfied with City services
- ➢ Concern with some services:
  - ▪ Affordable housing
  - ▪ River Valley development
  - ▪ Social programs and services
  - ▪ Planning, infrastructure and debt

Discussion Summary:

Participants were not surprised with the Citizen Satisfaction results although there was concern in the survey approach. Many felt that those surveyed represented too narrow of a cross-section of the City and that the timing of the survey had an impact on the major concerns cited. It was suggested that more promotion and/or communication of the services that the City provides occur throughout the year and that more citizen input be encouraged on an ongoing basis.

There was overall satisfaction with City services. Some services that participants were concerned about were the lack of affordable housing, some social programs and services and the City's planning, infrastructure and debt.

Breakout Session Two: The City We Can Afford

- ❑ Forecast 2004

Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:

1. What is your reaction to the City's financial projections?
2. What is your reaction to the City's service challenges?

The following common themes were identified as reaction to the financial projections:

- Not a surprise
- Why are we hearing about this now?
- 0% tax increase for so long, not surprising the city is facing an operating gap
- Need more clarification on how the numbers were calculated
- The financial projection numbers that were presented caused quite a bit of concern but when participants understood what it meant to the average household the projections were accepted with less concern
- Make sure those who can't afford this are not adversely affected
- Need a long term plan
    - Current infrastructure and growth a problem

Discussion Summary:

The general reaction by participants to the financial projections for 2004 was that the current financial situation faced by the City was not a surprise. Many stated that the most likely cause for the operating gap and infrastructure deficit that the City is currently facing was the minimal tax increase that occurred from 1993 – 1998. It was generally felt by the participants that they needed more clarification on how the financial projections had been calculated before they could react fully to the numbers presented. Participants felt a little more at ease with the numbers

once they had been broken down and the participants had a better understanding of how they affect the average household. However, it was recognized that the current financial situation still needs to be addressed.

Many questioned why they were hearing about this now and why something had not been done sooner to address the budget shortfall. It was suggested that the City needed a long-term plan to address the current infrastructure problems and increasing growth of the City. Concern was voiced that the City should ensure that those who cannot afford additional taxation not be adversely affected. Many participants felt that the City needed to better understand how growth is affecting the City. It was suggested that growth linked with infrastructure costs needs to be a major part of the city's plan.

The following common themes were identified as reaction to the service challenges:

- Not surprised
- "We want the services of a big city but the taxes of a small city"
- Key provincial and federal initiatives that will impact the City are not reflected e.g. Kyoto, Justice, etc
- No coordination to challenges – some are related; need to be incorporated into a master plan

Discussion Summary:

General reaction to the service challenges presented to participants was that of not being surprised. Some comments shared the common theme that citizens want comprehensive service provision but are not willing to pay the taxes that accompany the delivery of these services. There was some concern that some of the key current provincial and federal initiatives that will affect the City are not reflected in the challenge list. It was suggested that better coordination of the challenges is needed as many are related and could be addressed as a group instead of individually.

- 2004 Options

Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:

1. What is your reaction to the proposed options?
2. Are there other options or actions that the City should consider?

The following common themes were identified as reaction to the proposed options:

- Options are limited to service cuts and tax increases
- The City should explore revenue strategies and elimination of services

- Overall, accepting of Option 1 but the City must be more accountable with expenditures. Is 10% the real number for the tax increase if Edmonton Police Services is not included?
- We have a problem, address it
- 0% tax increase budget equals failure to address the issues
- Concern about how the poor would be affected with a tax increase

Discussion Summary:

Overall, participants agreed that we need to pay for our financial situation, and an increase is part of that package, however, revenue and cost initiatives must occur and the poor should not be harmed by such increases. In the first session, consensus was that the options presented were not acceptable as they were limited to services cuts and tax increases. It was suggested that the City should explore revenue strategies and service reductions before increasing taxes. In the second session, there was general acceptance of Option One but only if the City becomes more accountable and that the tax increase is only in effect until the operating gap and infrastructure deficit becomes manageable. Many participants acknowledged that we, as a City, have a problem and that it needs to be addressed now. There was consensus that a 0% tax increase budget for 2004 equals failure on the City's part to address the current budget situation.

The following common themes were identified as other options or actions the City should consider:

- There were questions on what makes up core services. It was suggested that the City needs to identify the core services that must be provided. There was also question on how to escalate funding of these services to the province
- Decreasing services is not an option
- Maintain service levels through revenue strategies and cutting administration costs
- It was questioned whether the City needs to be everything to everybody
- Liked the idea of linking tax increase to MPI
- Use lotteries
- Need better planning
- Re-examine user fees and funding allocations
- Explore cost sharing with other municipalities

Discussion Summary:

Participants agreed that more service reductions are not an option but felt that a service review was needed to better define what core services the City needs to provide. It was felt that the City is trying to provide too many services and is spreading the provision of services too thin. It was also questioned how the City

could obtain necessary funding for some of these services from other orders of government.

Some common options that participants thought the City should look into include revenue strategies, cutting administration costs, linking tax increases to the municipal price index (MPI), re-examining user fees and their current allocation and exploring cost sharing opportunities (e.g. road maintenance) with surrounding municipalities.

- The Growing Role of Municipal Government

Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
1. Should some services, such as ambulance or social housing be turned over to other orders of government?

The following common themes were identified in response to the question:

- General consensus that the municipal government should not turn over certain services to other forms of government
- Concern that the quality of service would decrease if administered by the provincial or federal government
- Municipal government should deliver the services but funding should come from the provincial or federal government

- Regional Financing

Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
1. Should the Province step in and ensure that Edmonton is properly compensated for facilities and programs that benefit the region? If so, how?

The following common themes were identified in response to the question:

- The province should ensure that the City is properly compensated for programs and services that benefit the region
- Question as to how to do this
  - Through user fees
  - Generation of revenue from events
  - Taxes
- Recognition that a better working relationship with the province is needed

- Regional Governance

Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
1. Should Edmonton City Council start pressing the provincial government to amalgamate municipalities in the Edmonton region?

The following common themes were identified in response to the question:

- Split response
- Most responding no stated they did not want Edmonton to become another Toronto; this may cause fighting among municipalities
- Majority responding yes stated that collaboration with other municipalities was required first and that only those services shared by all municipalities be amalgamated
    - Recognition that this would take time and effort

- Land Use Management

Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:

1. Should Edmonton City Council develop additional policies to encourage the redevelopment of older parts of the city; make more efficient use of land as the city grows and ensure that the city grows in a more cost-effective manner?

The following common themes were identified in response to the question:

- Majority of participants responded yes to this question
- The City should make more efficient use of land within the city before expanding
- A balance needs to be found between economic considerations and quality of life
- This is a must – "planning vs. urban sprawl"

Conclusion

Based on the comments and feedback, participants enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in this year's Dialogue Sessions. There was certainly a prevalent theme that citizens desire more opportunities to have their voices heard by the municipal government in planning the City's future.

An important point to note from these sessions is that in both days of the Dialogue Session the participants stated that more communication about the current challenges and issues that the City is currently facing was needed. Many felt that the communication process, going forward, needs to be founded on transparency, stakeholder involvement and effective two-way communication.

Participants also indicated concern that this was the first time that they were hearing about the financial challenges. Many found that the "Context, Challenges and Options" report was complicated and that clarification of how the numbers were determined was needed. A common suggestion was to keep the financial projections in simple terms so that citizens would better understand what it meant to them as a taxpayer.

One of the prevalent participant comments described was the desire for City Council and its Administration to act on the output of these sessions. It was the hope of all the participants that the reoccurring themes, as well as new ideas, are used to provide a new outlook for the Council and to provide focus as it takes its next steps in the 2004 business planning and budget process.

Participant Evaluation of Community Dialogue Session

At the end of each dialogue session, participants were encouraged to provide feedback regarding the Community Dialogue Session process. Overall, participants enjoyed the opportunity to provide input and direction to the City Council and its Administration regarding the 2004 Business Plan and Budget. The majority of participants found the background material to be quite helpful and informative. Many of the participants also felt that they had a better understanding of the challenges and issues that are currently affecting the City.

Of the 84 participants, 70 submitted feedback forms. A summary of all participant feedback and the feedback form are presented in Appendix IV of this report.

The following data represents the averaged results provided by the participants during both sessions (June 3 and June 4). Participants were asked to circle a numerical response, with five corresponding to strongly agreeing with the statement, three being no opinion and one that they strongly disagree with the statement.

Question 1 – Average Response: 4.4
I feel that my comments and opinions were heard and acknowledged by the facilitator and my group.

Question 2 – Average Response: 4.4
I enjoyed participating in the Community Dialogue Session.

Question 3 – Average Response: 3.8
I found the background information informative and of benefit to my participation in the Dialogue Session.

Question 4 – Average Response: 3.8
I feel that I better understand some of the challenges and issues affecting the City of Edmonton.

Question 5 – Average Response: 4.3
I appreciated the opportunity to hear a summary of the sessions during the Moderated Session after lunch.

The following is a summary of the most frequently cited comments made by participants on the feedback forms about the Community Dialogue Sessions. Full documentation of the participants' comments is included in Appendix IV of this report.

General Comments Made by Participants
- Appreciate the opportunity to be a part of Dialogue Sessions
- Good Process
- Hope that City Council uses information from Dialogue Sessions
- Good facilitation
- Needed more time to review and discuss the material.

Appendices

Appendix I: Participant List

June 3, 2003 – 39 Participants

Organization

Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee
Edmonton Social Planning Council
CUPE Local 3197
Edmonton Airports Authority
Environmental Advisory Committee
Catholic Social Services
Edmonton Area Child & Family Social Services
Edmonton Police Association
City of Edmonton Management Association
Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board
University of Alberta
Edmonton & District Labour Council
Edmonton Immigration Services Association
Millwoods President's Council

Community Stakeholders

A. Pankewich
B. Shewaga
E. David
R. Poon
D. Bezovie
L. Cuthbert
H. Briton
T. Richards
B. Tolchard
J. Yi
A. Kalutich
L. Cuthbert
V. Monterrosa
D. Dwyer
L. Diakiw
A. Kirillo
G. Maley
S. Ducharme
P. Craig
A. Fraser
D. Kowalski-Cox
R. Foster
R. Schenkel

June 4, 2003 – 45 Participants

Organization

Advisory Board Services Persons with Disability
Edmonton Transit Advisory Board
Millwoods President's Council
Urban Development Institute
BOMA
Edmonton Firefighters Association
University of Alberta
NAIT Student's Association
Capital Health
Edmonton Police Association
Greater Edmonton Homebuilders
U of A Student's Association (2)
Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee
Greater Edmonton Homebuilders
Edmonton Arts Council
Edmonton Sports Council
International Brotherhood Electrical Workers
Urban Development Institute

Community Stakeholders

E. Mowbrey
M. Bergen
B. Azore Chamberlain
E. Amer
J. Oostenberink
S. Provincial
E. Gorrie
P. Henry
A. Schupak
H. Zaseidko
S. Singh
G. Carmichael
N. Aspeslet
J. Keen
R. Blackwell
T. Karst
L. Sledz
P. Watamaniuk
C. Densmore
M. Dwernichuk
S. Crutcher
D. Deneiko
L. Morison
D. Avery
L. Jeffery Heaney
R. Sabourin

Appendix II: Community Dialogue Sessions Agenda

8:30 – 9:00am	Arrival (continental breakfast)
9:00 – 9:10am	Opening Remarks
9:10 – 9:15am	Breakout to session rooms
9:15 – 10:30am	Breakout Session One *The City We Want* *Vision and Service Priorities*
10:30 – 10:45am	Break
10:45 – 12:00pm	Breakout Session Two *The City We Can Afford* *Options and Strategies for 2004* *Council Motion*
12:00 – 12:30pm	Lunch
12:30 – 1:00pm	Summary and Closing Remarks

Appendix III: Summary of Facilitator's Notes

List Thought Provoking Questions for Participants and Themes from the Facilitated Groups

Breakout Session One: The City We Want

- ❑ Plan Edmonton Vision
  Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:
  1. What is your reaction to the vision statements?
  2. Are these statements meaningful to you?
  3. Which elements in these statements do you consider high priority?

- ❑ City Performance
  Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
  1. What is your reaction to how the City has performed with respect to taxation levels and financial management?

- ❑ Citizen Satisfaction
  Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:
  1. What is your reaction to the survey results?
  2. Do you agree/disagree with these results?
  3. Are you satisfied with City services?

Breakout Session Two: The City We Can Afford

- ❑ Forecast 2004
  Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:
  1. What is your reaction to the City's financial projections?
  2. What is your reaction to the City's service challenges?

- ❑ 2004 Options
  Thought Provoking Questions given to Participants:
  1. What is your reaction to the proposed options?
  2. Are there other options or actions that the City should consider?

- ❑ The Growing Role of Municipal Government
  Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
  1. Should some services, such as ambulance or social housing be turned over to other orders of government?

- Regional Financing
  Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
  1. Should the Province step in and ensure that Edmonton is properly compensated for facilities and programs that benefit the region? If so, how?

- Regional Governance
  Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
  1. Should Edmonton City Council start pressing the provincial government to amalgamate municipalities in the Edmonton region?

- Land Use Management
  Thought Provoking Question given to Participants:
  1. Should Edmonton City Council develop additional policies to encourage the redevelopment of older parts of the city; make more efficient use of land as the city grows and ensure that the city grows in a more cost-effective manner?

Tuesday, June 3

Plan Edmonton Vision

Comments:

- Good
- 'Feel Good" statements
  - But at what cost? Environment? Quality of life? Not just about money
- Trouble with 'international smart city', not clear…business? Global?
- How do we capitalize on local resources
- Culturally diverse – glad to see that
  - Never heard this before (publicly stated)… it's good
  - Mix is exciting, adds richness
- Contradiction (business – cultural)
  - We look only at the bottom line
  - Four statements: trying to be everything to everyone
- No contradiction
- Saying and doing are different things
- 'Welcoming city' – catch phrase
  - For the community/citizens
  - Hope for it to include new immigrants
- Priority: cultural diversity – Yes
  - Smart city
  - Connections of other communities (international)
- Pride in sporting community
  - 'City of Champions'
- Promote economy of Edmonton
- What is a 'smart city'?
- 2 and 3 are very similar
- Rather see statement #1
- No comment, re: what the city should look like
- Not enough action implied
- Fairly accurate – culturally diverse, internationally smart.
- Rational approach – elicits minimal reaction
- Citizens taking a role statement, stronger language to be used
- Citizens play an important role in the vision
- First two bullets – multicultural
  - Third bullet – growth
  - Fourth bullet – friendly
- Sounds alright
  - Multicultural versus culturally diverse
- Expand what it means – "vibrant economy"
- "Locate and expand" to be replaced by "friendly business environment"
- Today – not sure economy is vibrant, jobs require skills and it is difficult for those who may not have those skills

- For immigrants, a buddy system
- Not sure if we are business friendly
  - Long decision-making cycle
- First impression – wow, that's exciting
  - Culturally diverse, proud
- Are these statements inclusive? Are all people represented?
- Cultural diversity with different needs
- Articulated directions but not there yet
  - Strong cultural diversification
  - Weaker – welcoming
- Well positioned in all areas and well equipped to improve – Edmonton is a fantastic place to be.
- Verbs interesting – reflect a goal to choose and want
  - Looking ahead – trying to discover something about ourselves
- Change – reaching for something, it's challenging
- Reflects our strengths
- Statements are true but need more clarity and focus (easily captured – recognizable)
- To promote – need more clearly defined vision statement
- "Choose" – people don't often have the choice
- "Choose" – depends on various factors where they want to or have to live (i.e., certain area of the city)
- We did choose this city based on many of the factors articulated
- Positive
- Encompassing
- What Edmonton can brag about
- Need to define "smart city", i.e. Technology?
- Volunteerism should be included in some format
- Should stress Grass Roots – people
- Multicultural city
- Need to understand that attracting business = increase in the cost of living within the city
  - Costs in city increase with attracting business
  - May be offset by additional revenue
- Smart city – infrastructure demands, not keeping up to the growth

City Performance

Comments:

- Competition – Does it have a role to play in civic administration?
- Require clarification of terms – "strong balance sheet"
- Generally all listed points listed are good
- Performance statements fall under the vision statements
- Require continuous community consultation – ongoing through budget exercise
  - Dedicate resources to complete this
- Generally the City is well managed

- More City Citizen consultation on important issues
- Sometimes too much community consultation – City administrators/politicians should make decisions without always asking for public opinion
- Well-managed cities provide healthy living environment, i.e. water quality, parks, and waste management
- Balance Sheet
    - Credit rating too subjective
    - Rely too much on endowment fund
    - Principle is correct but not enough information to comment
- Debt
    - Tie debt to assets
    - Agree with principle
    - Moderate to low
- Competitive
    - Solid performance
    - Attracts people and business – low cost of living
    - Go low as we can go, but have to manage growth
    - Need to look at health; social services areas, decreasing income housing (poverty)
- Value
    - Chart p. 20 – need to show more of this
- Protection
    - Poor in terms of protection
    - Low number of police
    - Fire / EMS stations and response times
    - Need to diversify or balance
    - Stop cutting services
- React fairly positively
    - Caution: "manage opposed to proactive, e.g. business orientation"
- Need to be showcasing how we plan to manage the future
- Values of the people attach the money
- "Financially sound" is a good thing
- "Expectations" language was not explicit
- Have not met those expectations
    - e.g. essential services
- "Practice what you preach"
    - Communicate the good and bad things associated with City Performance to the community citizens
    - Citizens then can take action
        - Votes
    - Organization needs to be people responsible around people performance
- Fairly good city, but sacrifices a lot
    - e.g. Police Services
- Buildings and infrastructure – how are they being managed?

    - e.g. Social services moved again after 4 years – money could be spent differently
- Priorities may need to be refined
- How does the city work with other levels of government, e.g. Healthcare, Education
- Not to focus on debt relief but in people programs
- Well managed but with exception to the last few years:
    - Use strategies for added costs for services
- How do implications of fixed or low wage earners affect the strategies?
- How are my taxes being used? For example: pg. 20, 17% are *other*
- I want to know exactly where my dollars are being spent – accountability
    - Have a figure like pg. 20
- Medicare – as well managed
- City council is not active enough to obtain provincial funding likewise with federal government to meet the growth and demand expected of city services
- Are we well managed? Citizens need to have better information and/or communication
- Better citizen interaction during budget process. e.g. Churchill Square
- Well managed but new reality is that costs are increasing, growth / infrastructure requirements
- Need to do things better, in a different way
- Infrastructure requirements require us to address it, we can afford to continue to grow (urban spaces) inner city schools underutilized; *may need to limit growth* and *redevelop inner core*
- Developers are asked to control
- Don't have road systems to support growth – not sustainable
    - Balance – inner city redevelopment
- All development should be mixed – low, middle, high
    - Don't want to create ghettos
- Good track record
    - Mission statement "feel good", but physical part – what does inner core look like?
- How do you get a mixed community – need to see a physical context of how we live in the community
    - Housing accessible to low income?
    - NIMBY syndrome
- Mixed communities – taxes based on assessed value of property
- Riverdale – non-profit housing growth, increase in taxes, no distinction for this type of co-op housing
- Taxation an issue, but needs to be reconsidered and fair
- Debt – city has done good job of managing debt but province has demands to be "debt free". However, government needs to support infrastructure – we need debt – just need to have good plan to manage our debt.
- Our right to have reasonable debt to support development / infrastructure of the city

- Urban sprawl – existence of affordable housing – taking over good, arable land for homes and allowing some areas to deteriorate
- Performance - bottom line driven - what about people who don't' have a "voice"?
- What is the city's role in providing services to people?
    - People services vs. infrastructure
- Mix of what's needed vs. what's lobbied for – not just about roads but also quality of life
- Have to look at everything
    - Social need
    - Sprawl, etc.
        - Are we doing it efficiently, effectively – can we afford it?
        - How much can we increase revenues?
- Competitive - goes beyond financial side, e.g. educated workforce
- Need to effectively control
- We don't have control over expenditures
    - Financial Management; taxation levels
    - Governments compete for tax dollars; citizens don't necessarily get it back
- Management of dollars – effectively manage money it has as a performance measure
- City has done a good job
- Churchill Square – nice to develop but surpluses should or could maybe go elsewhere, example: poor management
- Priorities (Churchill Square (low))
    - Need to prioritize competing issues, how to maintain quality of life?
- Hard to judge performance because city lacks control and lack tax base
- Expectations of citizens
- Not effective communication if citizens (they need to know what the situation is that the city faces)
    - Transparency
- Competitiveness (is good) – not at the expense of the citizens
    - Should be based on citizen needs (not only tax levels of other cities – poor comparison)
- When comparing with other cities we need to remember Edmonton's unique circumstances (i.e.: weather, housing)
- Want realistic competition that is conducive to Edmonton environment
- Don't want 'bad' business
    - Good business (good pay, well treated employees) will benefit the city
- Stay away from debt, as it will only worsen
- Debt
    - Modest debt is needed because we can't wait on same initiatives
    - Difference between debt and foolish spending (e.g. roads)

Citizen Satisfaction

Comments:

- Biased survey example
    - May not capture all citizens – only participants that had phones were surveyed
- Overall satisfaction with services
- General Agreement with survey findings
- Subsidized social housing should have made the list of importance vs satisfaction.
    - Students – university, high school
    - Multicultural groups
- Social programs and services should have made the list
- Planning / Building – Roads. Infrastructure should have made the list
- Small business – cost of doing business, i.e. business tax/property tax
    - City fee's and permits for small business represent low satisfaction and high importance.
- Summer road – improve
- Winter road – educate
- Public transit
    - Improve
    - Educate public
    - More long term planning
- No opinions either way – more information needed to form an opinion – valid process
- Generally, people are satisfied with the city. Does represent for the most part feelings of the city – there will be outliers
- Don't forget about the ninety percent who agree and not always focus on the ten percent
- What strategies or activities are being used to increase the satisfaction results?
- Illustration of survey results needs to be more detailed
- People of Edmonton are somewhat satisfied with services
- Statistical validity of the process – not a representative sample
- People are somewhat satisfied
- Skeptical about survey – process is questioned
- Dissatisfied with city services
- Social – difficult to rate things like housing when you don't know who owns the housing
- Favor mixed communities but difficult to measure quality of housing – gap – citizens and structures to provide service. Citizens of an area need to work out these issues with city
- Importance versus satisfaction – Need to raise land use planning as priority item in top right quadrant of chart. Will have profound importance on satisfaction related to items 1-21
- Planning very important
    - Both for land use and for transportation
    - Short term – long term
- Asked the wrong questions (do you take public transit?)

- Additional funds: doesn't reflect accurately
- Roads and transit always top importance
    - Because of weather
    - Because they've been neglected (now they're a big issue)
- Transit in other cities is fantastic
- Conditions of roads is easy to measure (we all use them), could be over-emphasized as a result (people don't comment on what they don't know or what affects them)
- Would use transit if it were easy and available
- Satisfaction?
    - Lack of police officers
    - Police is top priority (because safety is important)
    - Deal with kids 'hanging around'
- Satisfied with transit: realistic expectations in terms of service
- Need to look at the other avenues to deal with kids hanging around
- Vision now: we constantly expand but are not considering the traffic flow (future plans)
- Public transit not growing fast enough
    - Growth management: can't do it simultaneously (not enough money)
    - Need to be realistic in requests and money needed to respond
- Should ask people which services they use – better understanding

Forecast 2004

Comments:

- Frightening numbers for the future
- Majority of Citizens will be affected
    - High impact on citizens
- Action needs to be taken to resolve issues
- Not unique to Edmonton – similar scenarios across the country
- City needs to find more cost savings
    - Review of core services
    - Why in this city the cost of core services higher than other provinces?
- Too much emphasis on business
    - Need to place emphasis on the Community/citizen
- Wow, that's a lot of money and the gap is very big
- Given these constraints how are the city officials going to do about service levels?
- Why are we facing the gap? Why is this so new?
- What are the strategies around service level cuts and tax increases or decreases?
- Priorities skewed:
    - Beautification versus base level services

    - Administrative accountability of responsibility if we pay these people good dollars what do they do each day?
    - Before cutting citizen services, provide administrative "thinness" versus "fat" e.g. roll back of wages
- Duplicity of services with other levels of government
- First word top of mind – scary
- Are we really well managed?
- Who is going to bare the burden of the funding gap?
    - If its citizens need the tools to be successful ex) training programs
- Review budget, CAP and OPS process…where are there problems? This should no be a surprise.
- City has a budget of $1 billion, thus $69 million is a drop in the bucket.
- Complexity:
    - Balance income (fair pay) versus administrative accountability, collective agreement review
    - Need to define what does success mean? It may require increase in taxes
    - 80% is labour costs thus need more efficiency and productivity
- What does quality of life mean?
    - Would help to define priorities
- Need to save money for infrastructure dollars.
- Small percent of operating budget – not so doom and gloom
- Critical point in time
- Drastic pressures
- Can't rely on EPCOR dividends
- Critical issues
- We've seen it coming and now it's here and can't be ignored
- Perceived that the "fat's" gone
- Need to keep our competitive advantage
- Provincial surplus growing but city picking up where Government no longer providing support
- City must mobilize citizens to be a political force
- Practical to cut back and to have a contingency
- Forecast predicts areas of need so services sector will have to be viewed differently and for infrastructure, management need to go to other levels of government
- Ask citizens to participate in maintaining communities
    - May be taking a lot for granted
    - e.g. Citizens can work on public gardens, etc.
- Is city right gov't level to provide the service, e.g. Ambulance should be managed through health system and provincial revenue.
- What services should we as a city be provided
- Assume growth based on current expansion – if you could limit and encourage growth in current boundaries, how would it impact the trends – cost pressures may not be the same

- Worried?
  - Everyone should be!
  - Not surprised
- Need to reevaluate city services
  - Are we maintaining what we really should? Should we let other things go? I.e. Not enough kids to keep a school open – why is it still open?
- Lack of awareness of problems
- How often do we really need to 're-evaluate' services…not good/fair for workers (they lose their jobs)
- Stop wasting money – take a more business approach to cost cutting
- Service challenges: not too surprised about what's on the list of challenges
- $69 million (current, 5.75% of operating budget) + $21.3 million = $90 million
- Why does the gap exist?
  - Dependence on EdTel endorsement funds (reduction in returns)
- Want the services of a large city but the tax level of a small city
  - Need higher taxes to sustain growth
  - 'Damned if you do, damned if you don't'
- Service Challenges - No big surprises
- Decrease infrastructure options
- Don't' make too much of deficit (operating)
- Capital gap is bigger issue
- Need priority areas to support long-term development
- Service Challenges
  - Balance
  - No surprises
  - What about key policy issues? e.g. Kyoto

2004 Options

Comments:

- Do not like the 4 options
  - All four will raise taxes
- 3 of 4 services illustrate EPS services
  - Political involvement with other levels of government to cover shortfall
- Increase of fines to cover costs is a money grab – where is this money going?
- Option 1
  - Acceptable increase in tax for the majority of the population
  - Time to catch up. Take care of the issue now
  - Clarify business model change – what does it mean
  - For Certain groups the tax increase to large to accept
  - 10% okay, needs to examine alternative ways to reduce the 10% using federal and provincial funding
  - Overall – 10% for citizens is very high, but no desire to reduce services

- Not too bad, but must do something about police
- Need to see $10 million and service challenges were funded – accountability
- Even if support for 10% increase wouldn't solve the problem
- Need comprehensive review of how services delivered, i.e., which are core and which are non-core (e.g. Golf courses)
- Police services driven by effective lobby but increase in crime stat's not significant enough to warrant increases in police services
- Need to rethink kinds of policing
  - E.g. Technology, not as aware of activity in community
- Need statistical analysis on crime (violent crimes more sensational)
- Need to be competitive with 21 municipalities around us

➢ Option 2

- Small business perception – too high. Tax hike hits small business even harder than the average citizen
- Rental market hit more than 5.6%. Tax increases tend to get put onto renters at a higher rate than the percent applied to the property owner
- Not enough information to make decisions on which services will be cut
- No service reductions
- Price to be paid in staff – more to do, fewer resources
- Aging workforce - may not find people to do the jobs
- "Stretching" is painful (unseen price)
- Rather than stretch, could try new and different, e.g.: could increase the business model changes to more than $10M
- Rather than just looking at service reductions, need to identify if there are services that can be eliminated entirely or transferred to a different level
- The point is to look at everything

➢ Options 3 and 4

- Not enough detail
- Small business – not in acceptance with options 1 and 2
- Small business would like to see services reduces and taxes reduced
- Combo of decreasing service and increase taxes bad
- MPI is right measure
- Do services right or not at all
- Reasonable provided some services transferred and using indicators to identify areas of need

➢ Other Options

- Time to stop stretching of services
- Maintain quality of life
- Look to services – needs vs. cost of providing certain services, i.e. reduce street lighting
- Core services – review to drive additional savings

- Fees for service – user fees. Readdress user fees across the city
- Improve public transportation
- Reduce usage on roads, etc.
- Look at ways to get funding from provincial and federal governments and big businesses
- Need to involve provincial and federal governments – transfer funds
  - Lobby effort
- Other funding formulas for core services
  - Naming rights for EMS – revenue
  - Charge for fire rescues (province, insurance)
- Green strategies, not user fees
  - Tax breaks
  - Different rates
- Regional model
- Efficiencies thru e-commerce
- Split protective services budget form regular budget
- Option 5
  - Accounting review – where is the money going
  - Start with administrative review, "chop the fat", not client facing services
  - Duplicity of services
  - Labour review – salary caps
  - Review revenue strategies used, ex) EPCOR & ATCO
- Options presented are not good
  - Service level cuts and public safety at issue
- Different funding strategies need to be used e.g. Government funding
- Options are not palatable
- Past tactics increase taxes and/or decrease service levels have not worked
- Examine revenue strategies now and in the future
- Review of administration
- Does not agree with taxes increasing, housecleaning is warranted
- When presenting financial information, present it simply and positively
- Fourth option – lets look at productivity, salary negotiation (**fair compensation)
- EPCOR money to fund long-term capital projects
- Administrative review
  - Structure
  - Human Resources
- No sense of "urgency" in options presented
- Will need to be a combination of options
- Concern - the options are immediate. Issue – what is long term solution because the same options will be there next year

- Will be important to focus on long-term issues – what options to resolve $214 Million
- Suggestion – targeted services, e.g.: responsible to needs in all areas not by special departments (hard and soft)
- An extensive review could help target services
- Complete elimination or transfer of service to other level of government
- Public / private options emerging as a solution, e.g. in development and management of some facilities (impact on business model)
- Some services might be delivered more effectively by the private sector
- Public / private options, need to consider that quality and standards are maintained (part of contracting process)
- Analysis of EMS, e.g. fire department – stations, staff
    - Issue around how data presented – undermines argument being made, e.g. high profile fires (p. 48)
- User fees (greater than current projections), could be considered, example: garbage collection
- More options:
    - Sources of income, EPCOR
        - Dividends payment increase to limit tax increase
        - Could be seen as coming from citizens anyway (put hikes on the backs of citizens)
- $100 may be okay for some but too much for others
    - Increase should not continue every year
- Combo option: prioritize challenges and raise taxes a little bit (reasonable)
- Can't be everything to all people
    - Should we?
    - Need a different mindset (service increases/growth costs money)
    - Balance between costs (money; environment)
- Provincial and federal transfer payments increase
- Gas tax increase
- Creative advertising on city property (tailgate of a city truck)
    - But this creates a public/private partnership – where does it end? (Slippery slope)
- This may be the price that is paid
- Cooperation – 'Metro-Edmonton' to reduce costs
    - Public transportation from other communities
    - Charge them for using our roads
- Province transferred/passed on costs to municipalities (therefore costs increased)

    - People need to be aware of level of government responsible for services
    - Overuse of volunteers
- Show breakdown of taxes – province looks good because their portion is included in city bill
- Tolls on roads because roads are a big part of the budget
    - Heavy trucks – responsibility in maintaining the roads? Tolls? Taxes? Compensation of some kind
    - In some cities this may not have worked (need community/municipality cooperation)
- Public needs to be realistic in their expectations and requests
- Geographic expansion should be watched (as we expand, services must also, a cost is associated with this)

Wednesday, June 4

Plan Edmonton Vision

Comments:

- Like inclusion – inclusive society
- Accessibility
- Agree
- Narrow gap between have's and have not's
- Responsiveness, city responsive to citizens
  - Proactive
- Concern with #4
  - Should be a balance between citizen and city
- Cosmopolitan city with heart of a small town
- Shed lunch bucket town image
  - Blue-collar town – become more cosmopolitan
- Promote lifestyle – Quality of life
  - Balance
- Smart city – what does this mean?
- Personal and professional growth
  - Contribute to economy
- Generally agree
- Concern re: #3 – moving to perimeter of city
- Strong re: #4
- Partner with province not reflected
- "How to get there" not included
  - i.e. put promote in front of each – force city to create opportunities
- Diverse and international are the most important
- 'Safe' is needed
- Ambitious; sounds good – extensive; not focused
- What is 'smart city'?
- Positive
- Needs to be affordable – currently is not in some parts of the city, e.g. inner city, these populations don't get to participate
- 1 and 3 – captures the essence
  - Trouble with smart city
- Statements are too broad
  - Need more explanation
- Safety – against crime; more police; not only physical safety
- Direction? Plans? Where is the vision taking us?
- Vague; 3rd is focused on outcome – doesn't say how
- 'Service to the community'
- Are outward looking; not a lot to refer to today's here and now
- People here, today, are not included/addressed in the statements
- Control / growth – 1,000,000 cap maintain – is a regional issue
- Smart city – long way to go – we're an oil city

- Need inclusive as well as diverse
- We could do more to attract business
- The city is green, beautiful
- Citizens take pride in the city
- Seem vague
- Need plans and projects
- International Smart city – what does it mean?
  - Should mean more than just wired (online)
  - We need to be a net contributor of technology
  - Cliché
  - Want to be respected internationally
- #1 is the most meaningful
- #3 and 4 are included in #1
- #4 talks about citizen contribution – "warm and fuzzy" not really vision
- Feels like a branding exercise
- #1 is a priority – says more about the City than others
- #3 and 4 seem to be goals not vision statements

City Performance

Comments:

- Expectations – should have access to essential services (transportation – Dats, Taxis) on demand
- Done well with city performance; how do you motivate city staff to come up with ways to save money?
- Do not incur debt to cover operating deficit
- Only incur debt for capital expenditures
- Meet needs, expectations of the citizens
- Need to include quantifiable measures
- Understand perspectives of those leaving the city
- Clarification of terminology within statements
- Quality of life not reflected in statements, i.e., balance sheet
  - In decision making
- Citizen inclusiveness on what is a useful fee and what should be included in taxes
- Difficulty in defining the role of government and city
- Expenditures
  - Generally good

- Haven't let the people know how they have done
- Question re: Sale of EdTel/Epcor the same?
- Years of 0% tax increase put us in a hole – need a tax increase to keep city functioning
- Service needs have increased
- Need long term strategic plan

- Debt
  - Zero debt is preferred
  - Debt must be managed
  - Okay for infrastructure (as investments), but must be strategic
  - Need to show benefits
  - No debt for operations
- Partnerships is missing from performance
  - Province
  - Within the community
- Failure to invest in infrastructure will lead to increase in operating costs
- Competitive
  - Great deal right now – may have to increase tax to maintain services
  - Starting to look like or operate like a Walmart
  - Caution re: balance between tax and economic development
  - Reinvestment in services may actually decrease costs
- Not very good
  - Population growth
  - Public sector 'bust', private sector 'boom'
  - Lack of support for private sector
- Need other levels of government to help
- Ability of city to compare/benchmark against other cities of similar sizes and issues
- Sounds better on paper
- Can't maintain services due to growth
  - Stop 'mega' projects till other services are taken care of
  - i.e., LRT expansion, Churchill Square
- Take care of here and now
- Ensure essential services are addressed
- The statements represent the wish list *of* all cities, organizations, etc.
- In comparing – we'd probably be pleasantly surprised at our standing
- Poorly managed finances
  - Leadership is needed in Councilors
  - Need a better infrastructure plan
  - Foresight is lacking, i.e.: South Edmonton Common and Roadway Lanes
  - Need to prioritize
  - Like the planning of our city
- Day to day operations is going well
- Province is not passing off enough money to municipalities = biggest problem, thus, out of the city's control
- Need to look at the bigger picture

- Need longer term planning
  - Treat city budget like we treat personal/home budget
  - Don't spend money we don't have
- Competitiveness should be removed
  - Administrative versus political decisions
- Quality of life should be considered when spending – is the spent money going to improve our city and quality of life?
- Rotate city employees between departments to keep fresh ideas flowing
- We don't seem to measure up on these
- Vision for all cities
- Road and maintenance
- Expenditures
  - Seems to be a waste of money e.g. bus schedule, LRT
  - Need more explanation of what is happening
  - Need to explain in simple terms
- Debt
  - Moderate? What does that mean?
  - Avoid debt unless necessary
  - No debt – easy way out
- Competitive – business and lifestyle
- On some things we are doing well; others not
- We should be unique
- We are losing businesses to Calgary
- Airport is a factor – direct connections
- We can't fix geography so lets go for uniqueness
- Political "pull" in Calgary
- Good value
  - Lots of services for families
  - Prostitution too wide spread causes other problems
  - Cleanliness not so good
  - People should clean up their own yards and area
- Expectations
  - No – some are not dealt with
  - Acknowledge messy problems and deal with them openly – "good, bad, ugly"
  - Yes – if citizens yell e.g. snow removal
  - Realize we are a big city with some of those problems
  - City needs to manage as well as understand problems
  - More responsive on major issues
  - Sometimes City overreacts (knee-jerk reaction)
- First five are dollar focused
- Performance and citizen expectation are the most important
- First five
  - Typical of business
  - Easy to monitor
- Statements are vague

- #6 is the outcome of the first five
- Generally, some wasteful spending
- Good job at financial management
- Taxation levels okay
- Need to factor in other things that will impact the City
- As citizens, need to be aware of the factors that affect the City
- What about average taxes? Increasing taxes is okay for services
  - Ned to identify priority areas
  - Need core values
  - No more skewed priorities (less tax for professional sports teams)
- City has done a good job with all of the challenges they are currently facing
- Need better deals with municipalities
- Don't pay enough taxes but need to address priorities
- Focus on core services
- Need to identify/gain general consensus of shat core services are
- Pay most taxes to federal and provincial government but get the least from them
- Invest in prevention not the problems
- Be more proactive rather than reactive
- Quality of life needs to be a focus
- Job creation
- Maintain city centre
- Invest in youth
- Need diverse business
- Need to take risk but at same time need to understand failures
- Rebuild infrastructure
  - Promote festivals/events
  - Increase revenue generation
- Need to look at those services that are priorities first
  - Life sustainability
  - Social responsibility
  - Social well-being

Citizen Satisfaction .

Comments:

- Not surprising
- Citizen concerns with provincial government programs/services
- Lack of understanding of what services belong to which government
- City should promote what they are doing – publicize report
- Concern with access to transit – fixed income citizens
- Should include lack of affordable, accessible housing
- People entering exciting city

- Should be a better indicator of city satisfaction

- Citizens should be better informed of what city offers – what is behind the scenes to provide services?
- City should provide greater outlet to express opinions and feel heard
- Citizen Expectations
  - Some areas not performing well
  - Direct result of some other areas (taxes)
  - Need to manage urban sprawl
  - Responsive to complaints, request for services
  - Protective services should be a priority
  - Volunteers for parks, etc.?
  - Adopt a park program?
- Survey
  - Fire has done well but not used to capacity; not prepared for growth
  - May not reflect real issues
  - Are expectations realistic?
  - Need to keep public transit costs down
    - Efficiency opportunities
- Only one survey – must question reliability
- Skeptical due to conversation today
- Roads are not good – infrastructure is poor
- Concerns about safety and needs to be enhanced
- City's growth and climate ensure roads will always be an issue
  - Development depends on the roads
- Public transit needs to be addressed to alleviate pressure on road system
- Hard to keep up with expansion
  - Roads and transit go hand in hand
- Safety (police, fire, ambulance) also important
- Don't have necessary information and therefore can only give limited results
- Other areas of concern:
  - Police budget: have no idea if there really is a problem
  - Need more citizen input
  - Environment
  - Cyclist 'roadways'
- Poor transit access
- Positive impression of the city
  - Recognize faults exist
  - Transportation not such an issue
  - People nee to take responsibility for their city and community presence (civic duty)
- Do get good service
- Other services may be more important to some (instead of focusing on roads – focus on housing)
- Manage resources (buses)
- Areas of concern are too narrow

- Transportation is seen as a concern because it affects quality of life and is indicative of the ease of travel within city boundaries
- Accurate?
- Did timing affect results?
- Bias of telephone survey
- Survey sample questioned
- Demographics are important
- Satisfied?
  - Snow removal, pot holes, basic construction – no
    - Lack of planning, maintenance
  - Infrastructure - yes
- Accountability – why increase EPS dollars
- On whole survey good
  - Waste removal an issue
  - Need more accountability – need information to help understand the issues
  - Need to take pride in environment (eco-stations, recycling)
- Agreement that roads are a problem
  - Poor planning
  - Poor timing
  - Traffic light schedules should be changed for rush hour
- Agree that timing is a problem but planning is good; need to acknowledge the challenges of our climate
- Not enough playing fields and facilities
  - Need better infrastructure for sports and recreation to grow
  - Maintenance an issue
- Need more recreation facilities
- Transportation prices an issue
  - Difficult for youth
  - Difficult to get from one side of the city to the other
  - Need more signage
  - Need to make transit easier to use
  - Prices for seniors and youth should be lowered; fair for working adults
  - Need to increase ridership – will gain infrastructure
  - Transit system very good but could be improved
- Need a better breakdown of survey results
- Need a comparison to base results upon

Forecast 2004

Comments:

- Not surprised by numbers
  - 69 M is okay, 3.5 B staggering
- Need to balance citizen expectation with what is being paid for be the citizens
- Proactive action needs to be taken to stop future debt

- Need clarification on numbers – tax increases, inflation
- 69M out of context - need information, part of 97 M?
- Emergency Services
  - Risk of retirement
  - Big challenge
- Interrelationships among the challenges
  - Solutions need to be strategic, not tactical
- Revisit standards – may not need to overbuild infrastructure
- Languages/approach in challenges is inconsistent, i.e. roadways/transit
- Service delivery is reactive vs. proactive
  - Proactive strategies going forward
- More emphasis is needed on low cost housing
- Financial Projections
  - Must address short term issues i.e. operating gap
    - Services already spread too thin
    - Need to generate revenue
  - Need to demand support from province for infrastructure
- Service Challenges
  - Some discussion re: need for building upgrades
  - No major surprise
- Need to improve financial situation
- Increase services
- Diversify source of revenue
  - Tax increase should be last option
- Province needs a larger role, i.e. social services
- Creative solutions: don't raise taxes or reduce services – think outside the box
- Affordability concerns (for citizens)
- Lobby governments (provincial and federal)
- Very scary (directions) – need to maintain services
- Share deficit with outlying communities
- Cut city exposure
- Longer range forecasting is more scary then 2004 (current is not so bad in comparison)
- Concerned about the future
- Community apathy
  - Involve citizens in problem solving
- Financial Projections
  - With increase in taxes last year why are we facing a deficit next year
  - Taxes should be linked to inflation

- Long range planning is poor
- Inflation mechanisms are helpful
- Revenue vs. population growth not in balance
- Homelessness (affordable housing) is a challenge
- Poverty
- Franchise fees should be flat-lined in budget

- Not seeing the big picture
- Not surprised
- 0% tax increase was a factor to the problem the City is now facing
- Disappointment
- Caused because City did not want to take on debt
- Questions as to where revenue goes
- How can you forecast the budget without union contracts being signed?
- What does it mean for me?
- Need better communication
- What does it mean for the business community?
- Service Challenges
  - Pretty much expected
  - Need at minimum tax to increase with CPI
  - Need ceiling for tax increase
  - Need to develop river valley; should have restrictions on business/residential house development
  - Zoning and planning challenges missing
  - City should not have changed policy on residential housing
  - Need a better zoning system (building codes)
  - Need to have more input and communication
  - Need a higher profile

2004 Options

Comments:

- Need EPS numbers to make decisions
- City to promote
- Political accountability for tax increases
- Accepting tax increase to resolve deficit issues
- Historical Tax actions by city –brought us to our current state
- Take tax increase to resolve issues now vs. in the future
- Need to stall accountability
- Need additional detail on services
  - Measures/benchmarks the city is using

- Need to understand how user fees are being allocated or changes
  - Increase or decrease
- Reduce costs
- Reduce size of government
- Increase private partnerships
  - More involvement in private sector
- Citizen accountability
- Discussions required on user fees
  - Re-examine user fees
  - What is cost effective and sustainable?
- Matrix developed and communicated on how services are funded
  - By taxes or user fees
- Cut services
- Increase taxes
- Lower expectations of citizens
- Increase taxes of those draining the system in the short term, i.e. new communities
- Outsource services
- Rework existing services – review for inefficiencies
- Conduct cost analysis of city services – allocation of costs
- Incentives to encourage smart development, or new development
- Incentives motivate city administrators to achieve budget targets or reduce budgets.
- 10% tax increase is acceptable
- No service reduction is acceptable
- If service reductions, must prioritize:
  - Safety
    - EMS, fire
    - Roads
  - Need to maintain balance in order to achieve vision
- If property tax, no user fees

- Not comfortable approving increase without understanding full costs (i.e. police) and what getting in return
- Political message: Action what you hear!
- None of the above
- Creative revenue opportunities
- Different funding strategies away from stocks and bond
- Share with nearby communities (i.e. St. Albert) the costs associate with running the city (i.e. road maintenance)
- Regional cost sharing
- Investigate other forms of borrowing
  - Maybe we should have a debt for current needs
  - Look at other communities and into the past for solutions
- Don't like any of the options – services are too thin already
- Funding from provincial government
  - Lobby another level of government
- Look into Market Value Assessments
- Make citizens aware to give them a voice and address concerns as a community
- Sponsorship strategies from private organizations
- Lottery with profits going to the city
- Private sector involvement but be careful
- The entire group agrees that NO options are acceptable based on time received
  - More lead-time needed
  - More time to illicit feedback, thus temper recommendations to reflect
- Need to find ways to fund growth
  - Fewer services will not improve our city
- Option 1
  - Okay with increase if assured that dollars will be used well
  - Average taxpayer could afford $100 f there is accountability
  - Taxpayers should be able to influence spending
  - Too high for seniors (fixed income) facing other tax increases
  - 5% is more acceptable
  - Political will may prevent additional tax to fund growth
  - Public must be informed – need a better understanding
  - City Hall, house patrols
    - Needs not communicated
- Option 2
  - Taxpayers will accept 5.6% tax increase more readily
  - Can some services decrease waste in spending (need more efficiency)
  - All options require communication and information
- Option 3
  - Not prepared to accept service reductions as listed in report
  - Roads need a lot of work
  - Scaling services will put the city behind as it grows
  - This is a more realistic scenario
  - May be not enough dollars to really address issues
- Option 4

- No decrease in essential services e.g. fire, EMS
- CPI not a good benchmark
- 0% tax increase 1993-98 caused this situation

- Services stretched too long
- Need to take steps to fund services
- Can't reduce services
- Option 1 should be considered
- Option 1 okay until gap is manageable
  - Only service priorities funded (relevant – no wasteful services)
  - No skewing for business
  - Need service level review
  - Separate property tax
  - Need new deal with federal and provincial government
  - Look internally for efficiency
- Cut outsourcing
- Stop paying overtime/hire more staff
- Not re-using/recycling facilities effectively
- City should not take on costs that the user should be paying for
- City is playing "catch-up"
- Need better maintenance of buildings/new developments
- Go to other orders of government for funding
- Adjust tax allocation
- Infield housing - increase density?
- Other sources of revenue
  - Land development
  - Land owner
    - Need to look at portfolio and see if efficiencies can be gained
- User fees/fines/tickets
  - Need better breakdown of where money goes
- Core businesses/responsibilities
  - User fees are limiting use
- Need better planning
- More proactive monitoring
- Fines should not be used as budget targets
- Need to use user fees more effectively
- User fees vs. universal access

Council Motion Questions

Growing Role of Municipal Government

Comments:

- Ambulance services should be provided as a part of health system
- Issue is more – who assumes the funding for a level of service with city's limitation in ability to raise revenue

- Need to consider, where do citizens feel they have control over level of services – citizens want access to address level of quality locally, would be more difficult at a higher level of government.
- Consider categorizing service in alignment with vision, i.e. what's important to live, learn, work and play?
- Better negotiation b/w levels of government
  - Ambulance – give to province (not likely)
- No privatization
- Must address housing needs
- Whoever can provide service most efficiently and cost-effectively should do it
- Overlapping Services
- Control needed
- Cant' upload
- Service reductions – No
- Don't take on more downloading
  - Keep services close to citizens
  - Funding would transfer to province
  - Would be willing to pay more – user fees
  - Regardless of where, need services
  - Need balance between provincial funding and municipal top up
  - Look at other community resources (churches) for revenue
- Frustration because of a lack of background information, unfair questions
- Is this a wish list?
- Social services: Yes
  - Ambulance Services: No
  - Social Housing: Yes
- Need to ensure city has a role in addressing social concerns
  - Difference between governances and funding
- Look to industries
  - Yes for ambulance and should be part of health system
  - No for social housing – city issue
  - Social housing too big for City to deal with
  - Municipal more efficient; closer to people
- Both the City and the province should provide funding
  - Federal and provincial government do not have context to do a good job
  - Look into transfer payments
  - From other government but have City deliver services
- Service should be funded by appropriate government and delivered by appropriate government

Regional Financing

Comments:

- Yes, province should step in – it is their role
- Federal government should have role in distinction of taxes to municipalities
- Need strong partnerships
- Get regions to pay (prove to them who uses the services)
- Defining roles and responsibilities must occur
- City pays for legislation results from their governments
  - I.e. VLTs, cigarettes – city sees no money
- Money from provincial government owed to city for recovery
- Yes – per capita basis
- Provincial taxation
- Difficult to pull off
- No – consumes in the city, pay for it indirectly
  - Seems heavy handed
  - Relationship between municipalities in the region and with the province need to be improved
  - Get decision-makers – consensus
- Protecting "images" needs to end
  - Yes, province should contribute
  - Road tax linked to infrastructure
  - Should be based on regional radius
  - Outsiders pay user fees now
- Municipality should pay for services that benefit the City
- Province should be in the role of higher authority

Regional Governance

Comments:

- Regionalization (Good!) does not equal amalgamation (Bad!)
- Consider partnerships based on non-political boundaries (i.e. water shed boundaries)
  - Goes to taxation – use of infrastructure by surrounding communities
  - At what point is mass too large where you start to have inefficiencies again?
  - Compelling argument for amalgamation, but how far do you take it? This option is well worth examining.
  - Need to maintain certain standards when considering amalgamation of communities
- Not sure that force amalgamation will work
- Look into Toronto and Ottawa situation and costs
- If it saves costs: yes
- They (outlying communities) should pay for 'benefits' they get from Edmonton
- Could ask provincial government to push and see what happens
- Yes

- No, if costs outweigh benefits
- Need Information
  - Benefits to amalgamated services
    - Waste
    - EMS
    - Transportation
    - Fire
  - Some role for provincial government
  - Education could potentially be amalgamated
- Full amalgamation could have disadvantages (high expectations of level of service)
  - Could be expensive – need information
  - Bad idea
    - Don't want municipality's fighting
    - Ideas on growth are different
  - Good idea
    - Uniqueness
    - United vision
  - Should be dealt with
    - Sherwood Park
    - St. Albert
- Should look into cooperation agreements but retain autonomy
- Need working relationships and need to work together better
- Needs time to occur naturally

Land Use Management

Comments:

- Strategy should be based on need for revenues
- Charge developers to fund services
- Caution re: what is meant by efficiency – balance economic considerations with quality of life and environment
- Must consider core services in development plan
- Absolutely
- Totally
- Charge developers what it actually costs to develop the land (no deals)
- Need balance
- Redeveloping inner city
- Yes, i.e. old schools
- Support land use management
- Eliminate denudation of the city hub
- Need to be innovative in how we develop our city

- Cosmopolitan city: downtown core
  - Need policies to support redevelopment of downtown
  - Maintain parks
  - Avoid urban sprawl
  - Encourage redevelopment of substandard housing
  - Policies to promote downtown development worked well
- Yes, refurbish some parts of the city
- Manage urban sprawl and address inner city
- Find balance
- Services provided need to catch up with city growth and sprawl
- Be there as the communities grow; so too should infrastructure
  - Issues with downtown development – disagree with
    - Pollution and infrastructure has increased
  - There are areas in downtown that should be developed
  - Should taxpayers subsidize downtown development?
  - Need more social housing downtown
  - Make better use of empty buildings
  - Need responsibility for urban sprawl
  - Making homeowners pay for new developments loads costs on those buying new houses
  - Need green spaces as we expand
    - Parks make us unique
    - Downtown needs more
  - Clean up downtown beyond 97th Street - tourism
- No, stop favoritism
- Intensify units in developed areas
- Don't like the idea of encroaching on farm land
- Use the land we have first

Appendix IV: Participant Evaluation Results and Comments

Participant Feedback Form

Please circle your answer (5- strongly agree 3- no opinion 1- strongly disagree)

1. I feel that my comments and opinions were heard and acknowledged by the facilitator and my group. (1 2 3 4 5)
2. I enjoyed participating in the Community Dialogue Session. (1 2 3 4 5)
3. I found the background information informative and of benefit to my participation in the Dialogue Session. (1 2 3 4 5)
4. I feel that I better understand some of the challenges and issues affecting the City of Edmonton. (1 2 3 4 5)
5. I appreciated the opportunity to hear a summary of the sessions during the Moderated Session after lunch. (1 2 3 4 5)

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Summary of Results

Question 1 – Average Response: 4.4/5
I feel that my comments and opinions were heard and acknowledged by the facilitator and my group.

Question 2 – Average Response: 4.4/5
I enjoyed participating in the Community Dialogue Session

Question 3 – Average Response: 3.8/5
I found the background information informative and of benefit to my participation in the Dialogue Session.

Question 4 – Average Response: 3.8/5
I feel that I better understand some of the challenges and issues affecting the City of Edmonton

Question 5 – Average Response: 4.3/5
I appreciated the opportunity to hear a summary of the sessions during the Moderated Session after lunch.

Summary of Participant Comments

Thank your for your invitation to participate in this format of communication.
I am thankful for this opportunity. Facilitation was quite well done but please tell City planning group that more time is necessary.
Not enough time to list problems, review individual line items and to discuss specific examples.
Very good session. Thank you for inviting me to participate.
I think members of the breakout group that appeared to be from lower income levels were less comfortable making points. I worried that comments made showed a lack of understanding of real issues facing lower income residents. Decision making in a vacuum is not acceptable – even an estimate is better than nothing (funding of police services).
Difficult to have meaningful discussion when group members not prepared or do not understand the material. The background info and survey results were questionable and incomplete. Difficult job to hand over to us when the options are broad and much of the key information is unavailable or not yet determined. Thank you for this opportunity.
Poorly presented information (too complex/didn't frame information in ways that helped us to make informed decisions. Need to find ongoing processes to involve citizens not just in response to budget. Not clear how our participation will influence Council's decision-making process. No opportunity to talk about the values and presumptions that are driving these decisions.
I'll very much appreciate if I can see that citizens' opinions are actually taken into consideration before Council makes choices.

Time available very limited. Broader scope of subjects needed – too limited. Council must examine each department's operating costs for savings in lieu of tax hikes.
Need more info in background – a true reflection and completed research rather than a "view" represented to the group.
Should have included the complete Economics Special Report. Needed more opportunity to discuss service challenges.
Left out of frustration. Not enough information.
I believe that this type of community dialogue should continue.
Thanks for the invitation.
If the City is incurring operating debt then it is not properly assessing the needs of its citizens. Need to continue to provide essential services – needs of citizens are ever changing. City needs to provide incentives to businesses and property owners for making upgrades and renovations that benefit all citizens. Provide incentives to builders/planners/designers for providing accessible facilities and services.
Thank you for allowing me to feel that my citizen participation in this process can help keep our City the excellent community that it is.
Great session. Add a more diverse audience. I would invite more from the community, not for profit and the private sector.
Interesting experience. I don't think summary reflected our group's view that Council and Administration need more accountability to justify the need for a 10% tax hike. Participants in the Citizen Satisfaction survey should reflect population demographics of the whole city. I doubt the survey was totally valid or reliable.
Good dialogue in breakout sessions and provided everyone an opportunity for discussion.
Future sessions should consider full day sessions going into more detail.
There was a greater need to address youth separately from adults. Social housing and programs for the community lack substantial funding for the last few years. A greater need to increase funding for the next ten years.
The information booklet provided was very informative and well done.
Participants not well balanced (age). Very well moderated and facilitated.
Go for Option #1. Eventually we will pay for this decision whether we make it today or ten years from now. So do it now.
Thank you for including the general public in these discussion. I now know more about the City budget.
I would like to see a copy of the culmination of this info in the report that goes to Council. I would also think that a similar but perhaps more in-depth session like this on defining core services would be very valuable. I would love to participate in future sessions like this. As a citizen, I appreciated the opportunity to contribute.
I really enjoyed this. I gained a lot of insight and information that I would never have thought about. My facilitator was super and my group I enjoyed because of the range of views for personal to business.
Excellent session. Good investment of time and money.
Would have liked the study materials earlier. Not enough time to study.
I think this was a good session and a good idea. Council should listen to everyone not just the complaints.

Cost of $40,000 for this was well worth it!
Good process. Complex issues that are always understood as clearly as they need to before commenting. The realities of the budget will require some focused strong leadership in 2004 and the years to come.
I do not feel that any of the options for the City Business Plan and Budget cover the challenges or changes needed.
Very worthwhile. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.
This was a very good session. Moderator was good and kept the session going.
We really did not have enough time understand the concepts and really needed more time to read and more hours to comprehend information. The sessions should be more that four hours to get more details and be involved. I really enjoyed and would like to participate in future sessions.
I think that when big money issues arise like selling of utilities, etc. that there should be a plebiscite on the issue.
Very good. I learned.

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